

# NYC DDC

## Research Project

Practical Ethnography  
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# Background

## How could NYC DDC improve people's experience with construction sites?

We are students from Pratt Institute, working on an ethnographic study of people related to NYC construction sites.



# Research Goals

## The Big Question

How do we provide up-to-date information about the city's ongoing subsurface construction projects to New York City residents and visitors?



Our research goals

## How do we do this?

1

***Explore*** NYC dwellers nature of interaction with the construction

2

***Learn*** public's impression about the DDC

3

***Observe*** public engagement with construction site and communication between them and the in charge



Our Methodology

# Research Approach



## On Site Interviews

Structured observations and in-situ ethnographic-style interviews.



## Diary Studies

A 5-day study to understand people's misconceptions.



## Workshop Activity

Collaborative approach to brainstorming and concept creation.

## Big Idea 01

Small business owners are concerned about the visibility of their business.



**They are unaware on how and where to find information about the construction.**

And therefore are unable to provide any information to their customers.

## Big Idea 01

# What does our research tell us?

**"We don't really know when it's going to end, I think it's always been this way for the past few years."**

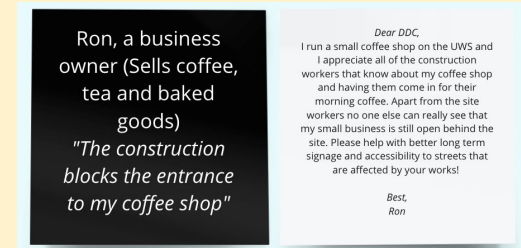
### Site Interviews

Quoted by the receptionist at a Medical Centre across the construction.



### Diary Study

A participant had noted down the thoughts of a small business owner near a construction site.



### Workshop

A participant had written complaints about a coffee shop owner not receiving their usual business.

## Big Idea 01

# Small business owners are concerned about the visibility of their business.



## Why is this important?

Construction blocks off sidewalks.

Small business are no longer visible.

Customers and businesses are unaware of the timeline of the construction.

Hampering customer engagement.

Feelings of disconnection, and no control.

## Big Idea 02

# Travel disruptions are on everyone's mind.



**Construction sites create unexpected changes to travelers daily routines.**

## Big Idea 02

# What does our research tell us?

**"I really wish I didn't have to park so far away from the houses I make deliveries to - the traffic has gotten so much worse too"**

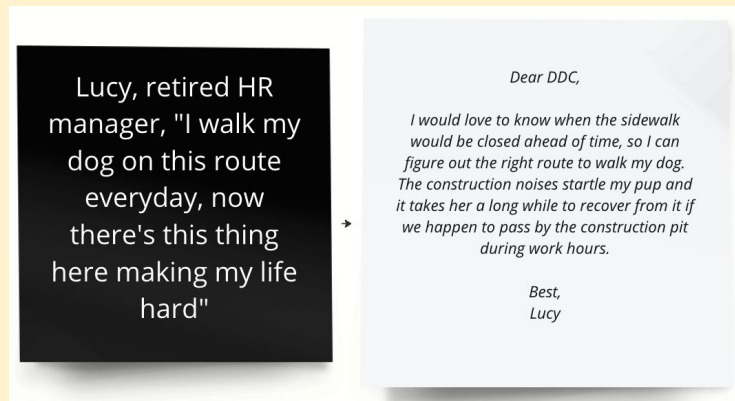
### Interview

UPS driver who needs to park his truck far from the address he is delivering to



### Diary Study

Travel disruptions were the biggest issue on our participants minds



### Workshop

Retired resident interested in figuring out a good route to walk her nervous dog

# Travel disruptions are on everyone's mind.



## Why It's Important?

Lack of information is a sore spot for residence.

Keep the public informed about their day to day travel plans.

Transparency builds trust.

Travel Information mixed with benefits of construction.



### Big Idea 03

# People want the construction sites to be safe and pleasant places



**We found issues surrounding noise, smell, and the unpleasing look of sites.**



## Big Idea 03

# What does our research tell us?

**Figure 5**  
Role: photographer  
All these things are decreasing my photos aesthetically.

**Figure 1**  
Role: NYC resident  
I know those dust My clothes are pure black, but not anyone.

**Eyesore**

"Ugh, that rat is an ugly, creepy, gross eyesore and now the sidewalk is too crowded" (referring to a big rat when workers go on strike)  
-- Pedestrian  
[Emotion: 3/5]  
Annoyance

"Ahh these things are decreasing my photos aesthetic."  
--As a photographer  
[Emotion: 3/5]  
Annoyance

"Does it have to be so noisy I have such a headache"  
Emotion: Annoyance

"It smells really bad, and I get worried about allergies."  
-- Pedestrian  
[Emotion: 3/5]  
Annoyance

"Ewww, those dust My clothes are pure black, but not anymore."  
--As a business people  
[Emotion: 1/5]  
Annoyance

### Diary Study

Multiple users have complaint about the look of construction, the dust, noise, and the smell. They usually react negatively when thinking about it.

**Sara, an NYPD officer hangs around the construction site.**  
"I don't know what's going on here, you might want to ask other people about it."

Dear DDC,  
I appreciate the effort from you to make the city functional and efficient everyday, but can you also make it beautiful and smell good?  
Best,  
Tired of smelly city

Too disappointed  
Annoyance 3/5  
Annoyance

Too disappointed  
Annoyance 3/5  
Annoyance

Too disappointed  
Annoyance 3/5  
Annoyance

**Peter, Works near construction site**  
"I work near the construction site at Greenwich. They start work very early"

Dear DDC,  
I really like the fact that you are making improvements to make our city better, but the construction takes a bit too long where I find it to be visually unattractive. Is there a way we can make it look nicer for us and for visitors that come to New York?  
Best,  
Peter

Too disappointed  
Annoyance 3/5  
Annoyance

Too disappointed  
Annoyance 3/5  
Annoyance

### Workshop

Two participants had noted complains about the noise, smell, and the look of the constructions.

## Big Idea 03

# People want the construction site to be a safe and pleasing place



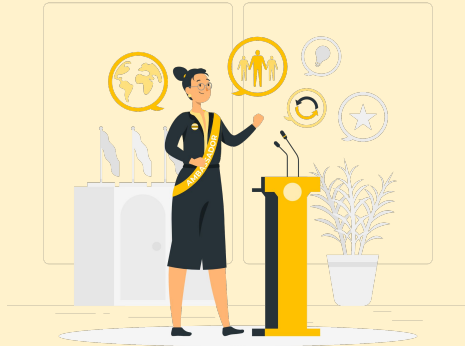
## Why it's important?

Diary study: participants rated their emotions as generally negative.

Eliminate biases and negative impressions on construction sites.

Making the site be a safe and pleasant place shows care for the public and helps build a positive relationship between the public and the DDC

# Our Big Recommendations



*Integrate with map tools*



*A way for civilians to  
communicate with DDC*



*Educate the citizens about  
the construction*

Recommendation 01

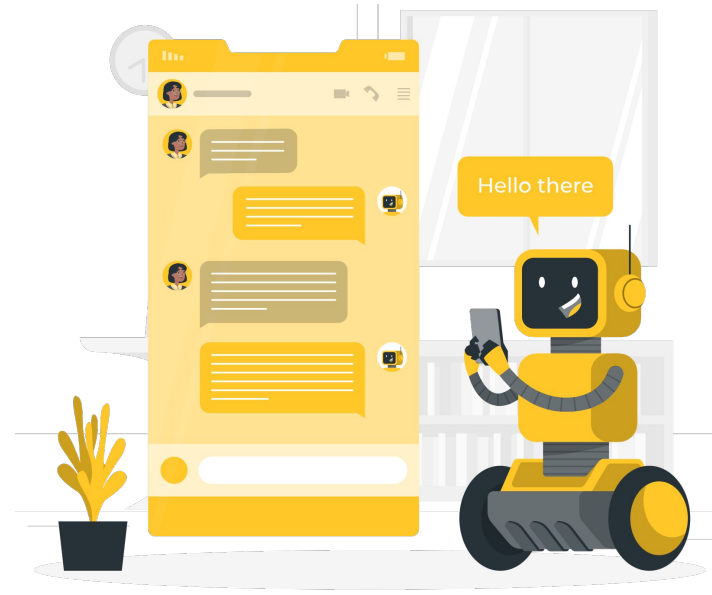
# Making travel seamless through a *Google Maps integration*



Create a live map, such as the MTA did. OR integrate with main map tools, like Google Map and Apple Map, providing add-ons that alert travelers as they planning their routes.

Recommendation 02

# A way for civilians to *communicate* with the DDC



With the help of a chatbot, residents can feel they are getting the answers they need in real time, lessening frustrations.

This chatbox can also educate residence on the benefits of the site.

Recommendation 03

# *Educates citizens* about the construction



Build attractive visual barriers between the public and the construction site. The barriers can be helpful in educating the public about the benefits and basic information about the work being done.

# Conclusion + Next steps



## Our Big Ideas

Impact on small business owners

Travel disruptions

Safety and wellbeing concerns of pedestrians



## Our Recommendations

Integrate with leading map tools

Ways for public communication

Educate citizens about DDC's efforts



## Next Steps

Explore solutions for small businesses

Hand off insights to Product Design team

# Thanks!



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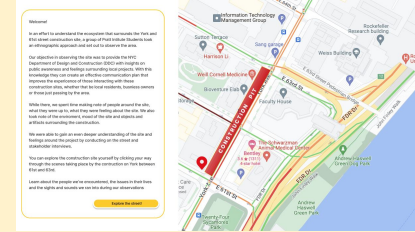


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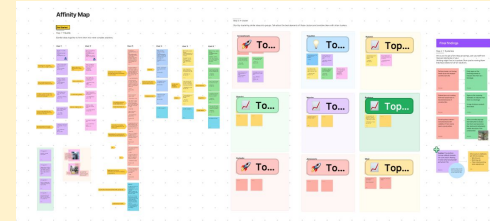


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## On-site interview Findings



## Dairy Study + Findings



## Workshop study

